

[Report No. 93-604]

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1 measures in the United States was authorized by the
2 Act of July 28, 1866 (14 Stat. 339) ; and

3 (2) the United States was one of the original
4 signatories to the Convention of the Meter (20 Stat.
5 709), which established the General Conference of
6 Weights and Measures, the International Committee of
7 Weights and Measures, and the International Bureau of
8 Weights and Measures; and

9 (3) the metric measurement standards recognized
10 and developed by the International Bureau of Weights
11 and Measures have been adopted as the fundamental
12 measurement standards of the United States and the
13 customary units of weights and measures used in
14 the United States have been since 1893 based upon
15 such metric measurement standards; and

16 (4) the Governments of Australia, Canada, United
17 Kingdom, India, Japan, New Zealand, and the Re-
18 public of South Africa have determined to convert, are
19 converting, or have converted to the use of the metric
20 system in their respective jurisdictions; and

21 (5) the United States is the only industrially de-
22 veloped nation which has not established a national
23 policy committing itself to and facilitating conversion
24 to the metric system; and

25 (6) as a result of the study to determine the

1 advantages and disadvantages of increased use of the
2 metric system in the United States authorized by Public
3 Law 90-472 (82 Stat. 693), the Secretary of Com-
4 merce has found that increased use of the metric system
5 in the United States is inevitable, and has concluded that
6 a national program to achieve a metric changeover is
7 desirable; that maximum efficiency will result and mini-
8 mum costs to effect the conversion will be incurred if the
9 conversion is carried out in general without Federal sub-
10 sidies; that the goal for the changeover period be ten
11 years, at the end of which the Nation would be predomi-
12 nantly, although not exclusively, metric; that a central
13 planning and coordinating body be established and as-
14 signed to plan and coordinate the changeover in coopera-
15 tion with all sectors of our society; and that immediate
16 attention be given to education of the public and to effec-
17 tive United States participation in international stand-
18 ards making.

19 STATEMENT OF POLICY

20 SEC. 3. It is therefore declared that the policy of the
21 United States shall be:

- 22 (a) to change the United States to the metric sys-
23 tem of weights and measures in a carefully coordinated
24 manner in order to reduce the cost of such changeover;
25 (b) to implement the changeover to the metric

1 system through the voluntary participation of the mem-
2 bers of each affected sector and group in the Nation;

3 (c) to facilitate and encourage the voluntary sub-
4 stitution of metric measurement units for customary
5 measurement units in education, trade, commerce and all
6 other sectors of the economy of the United States with
7 a view to make metric units the predominant, although
8 not exclusive, language of measurement with respect to
9 transactions occurring after ten years from the date the
10 Board commences implementation of the changeover
11 plan pursuant to section 11;

12 (d) to encourage efficiency and minimize overall
13 costs to society through application of the general prin-
14 ciple that changeover costs shall lie where they fall;

15 (e) to assist in the development of a broad educa-
16 tional program to be carried out in the Nation's ele-
17 mentary and secondary schools and institutions of higher
18 learning, as well as with the public at large, designed to
19 enable all Americans to think and work in metric terms;

20 DEFINITIONS

21 SEC. 4. For the purpose of this Act—

22 (a) The term “metric system of measurement” means
23 the International System of Units as established by the
24 General Conference of Weights and Measures in 1960 and
25 interpreted or modified for the United States by the Secre-
26 tary of Commerce.

1 (b) The term "engineering standard" means a standard
2 which prescribes a concise set of conditions and requirements
3 to be satisfied by a material, product, process, procedure,
4 convention, test method, and the physical, functional, per-
5 formance and/or conformance characteristics thereof.

6 (c) The term "international standard or recommenda-
7 tion" means an engineering standard or recommendation
8 formulated and promulgated by an interational organization
9 and recommended for adoption by individual nations as a
10 national standard.

11 ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL METRIC CONVERSION

12 BOARD

13 SEC. 5. There is hereby established a National Metric
14 Conversion Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Board")
15 to implement the policy set out in this Act.

16 SEC. 6. The composition of the Board shall be as follows:

17 (a) twenty-one persons appointed by the President
18 who shall serve at his pleasure and for such terms as he
19 shall specify who shall be broadly representative of the
20 American society including industry, labor, business and
21 commerce, the consumer, education, state and local gov-
22 ernment, science and engineering, and other affected
23 groups. The President shall designate one of the mem-
24 bers appointed by him to serve as Chairman and another
25 to serve as the Vice Chairman of the Board;

1 (b) two members of the House of Representatives
2 who shall not be members of the same political party
3 and who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House
4 of Representatives; and

5 (c) two members of the Senate who shall not be
6 members of the same political party and who shall be
7 appointed by the President of the Senate.

8 SEC. 7. No vacancy on the Board shall impair the right
9 of the remaining members to exercise all the powers of the
10 Board. Eleven members of the Board shall constitute a
11 quorum for the transaction of business.

12 SEC. 8. Unless otherwise provided by the Congress, the
13 Board shall have no compulsory powers.

14 SEC. 9. The Board shall cease to exist no later than
15 ten years after implementation of the plan begins as called
16 for by section 11.

17 DUTIES OF THE BOARD

18 SEC. 10. It shall be the function of the Board to devise
19 and carry out a broad program of encouragement, coordina-
20 tion, and public education with the aim of implementing the
21 policies set forth in this Act. In carrying out this program
22 the Board shall—

23 (a) consult with and take into account the interests
24 and views of the United States commerce and industry,
25 including small business; science; engineering; labor;

1 education; consumers; government agencies at the Fed-
2 eral, State, and local level; nationally recognized stand-
3 ards developing and coordinating organizations; and such
4 other individuals or groups as are considered appropriate
5 by the Board to carry out the purposes of this section;

6 (b) provide for procedures whereby industry
7 groups, under the auspices of the Board, shall formulate
8 and recommend to the Board specific programs for co-
9 ordinating the changeover in each industry and segment
10 thereof, and for suggesting specific metric sizes, shapes, or
11 other measurements for general use consistent with the
12 needs and capabilities of manufacturers, suppliers, con-
13 sumers, and other interested groups, and further con-
14 sistent with the national interest;

15 (c) publicize, in an appropriate fashion, such pro-
16 grams and provide an opportunity for interested groups
17 or individuals to submit comments on such programs. At
18 the request of interested parties, the Board, in its discre-
19 tion, may hold hearings with regard to such programs;

20 (d) facilitate and encourage the development as
21 rapidly as practicable of new or revised engineering
22 standards based on metric measurement units in those
23 specific fields or areas in the United States where such
24 standards will result in rationalization or simplification
25 of relationships, improvements of design, or increases in

1 economy consistent with the efficient use of energy and
2 the conservation of natural resources;

3 (e) facilitate and encourage the retention in new
4 metric language standards of those United States engi-
5 neering designs, practices, and conventions that are
6 internationally accepted or embody superior technology;

7 (f) cooperate with foreign governments and public
8 and private international organizations which are or
9 become concerned with the encouragement and coordina-
10 tion of increased use of metric measurement units or
11 engineering standards based on such units, or both,
12 with a view to gaining international recognition for
13 metric standards proposed by the United States and
14 to encouraging retention of equivalent customary units
15 in international standards or recommendations during the
16 United States changeover period;

17 (g) assist the public through information and edu-
18 cational programs to become familiar with the meaning
19 and applicability of metric terms and measures in daily
20 life. Programs hereunder shall include:

21 (1) Public information programs conducted by
22 the Board through the use of newspapers, maga-
23 zines, radio, television, other media, and through
24 talks before appropriate citizens' groups and public
25 organizations.

1 (2) Counseling and consultation by the Secre-
2 tary of Health, Education, and Welfare and the
3 Director, National Science Foundation, with educa-
4 tional associations and groups so as to assure that
5 the metric system of measurement is made a part
6 of the curriculums of the Nation's educational insti-
7 tutions and that teachers and other appropriate per-
8 sonnel are properly trained to teach the metric
9 system of measurement.

10 (3) Consultation by the Secretary of Com-
11 merce with the National Conference of Weights
12 and Measures so as to assure that State and local
13 weights and measures officials are appropriately in-
14 formed of the intended metric changeover and are
15 thus assisted in their efforts to bring about timely
16 amendments to weights and measures laws.

17 (4) Such other public information programs
18 by any Federal agency in support of this Act
19 which relate to the mission of the agency.

20 (h) consult, to the extent deemed appropriate, with
21 foreign governments, public international organizations,
22 and, through appropriate member organizations, private
23 international standards organizations. Contact with for-
24 eign governments and intergovernmental organizations

1 shall be accomplished in consultation with the Depart-
2 ment of State;

3 (i) collect, analyze, and publish information about
4 the extent of usage of metric measurements, evaluate the
5 costs and benefits of metric usage, and make efforts to
6 minimize any adverse effects resulting from increasing
7 metric usage;

8 (j) conduct research, and publish the results of this
9 research on any unresolved problems associated with
10 metric usage, including but not limited to the impact
11 on workers and on different occupations and industries,
12 possible increased costs to consumers, the impact on so-
13 ciety and the economy, effects on small business, the im-
14 pact on the United States international trade position,
15 the appropriateness of using Federal procurement to
16 affect conversion to the metric system, the proper con-
17 version or transition period, and effects on national
18 defense.

19 SEC. 11. (a) Within twelve months after funds have
20 been appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act
21 the Board shall, in furtherance and in support of the policy
22 expressed in section 3 of this Act, develop and submit to
23 the Secretary of Commerce for transmittal with his recom-
24 mendations within ninety days to the President and both

1 Houses of Congress, in accordance with subsection (b),
2 a comprehensive plan to accomplish a changeover to
3 the metric system of measurement in the United States. Such
4 plan may include recommendations for legislation deemed
5 necessary and appropriate.

6 (b) Upon transmittal of the plan to the President, the
7 plan shall be delivered to both Houses of Congress on the
8 same day and to each House while it is in session. The Board
9 shall implement the plan after sixty (60) legislative days
10 following the date of delivery to the Congress unless both
11 Houses of Congress by concurrent resolution shall have disap-
12 proved the plan, in whole or in part, within the same period.

13 (c) If a plan is disapproved by the Congress a revised
14 plan shall be submitted by the Board to the Secretary
15 within sixty days. Such revised plan shall be subject to the
16 procedures set forth in subsections (a) and (b).

17 (d) Any amendment to an approved plan shall also be
18 submitted by the Board to the Secretary and the President
19 and delivered to the Congress in accordance with the proce-
20 dures set out in this section. Such amendments shall be sub-
21 ject to the procedures set forth in subsection (b).

22 SEC. 12. The Board shall submit annual reports of its
23 activities and progress under this Act to the Secretary, to
24 the President, and to the Congress.

1 AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD

2 SEC. 13. In carrying out its duties, the Board is
3 authorized to:

4 (a) establish a Board Executive Committee, and
5 such other Committees of the Board as it deems
6 desirable;

7 (b) establish such committees and advisory panels
8 as it deems necessary to work with the various sectors
9 of the American economy and governmental agencies
10 in the development and implementation of detailed
11 changeover plans for those sectors;

12 (c) conduct hearings at such times and places as it
13 deems appropriate;

14 (d) enter into contracts in accordance with the
15 Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of
16 1949, as amended, with Federal or State agencies,
17 private firms, institutions, and individuals for the con-
18 duct of research or surveys, the preparation of reports,
19 and other activities necessary to the discharge of its
20 duties;

21 (e) delegate to the Executive Director such au-
22 thority as it deems advisable;

23 (f) perform such other acts as may be necessary
24 to carry out the duties prescribed by this Act.

25 SEC. 14. (a) The Board is hereby authorized to accept,

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1 hold, administer, and utilize gifts, donations, and bequests
2 of property, both real and personal, and personal services,
3 for the purpose of aiding or facilitating the work of the
4 Board. Gifts and bequests of money and the proceeds from
5 sales of other property received as gifts or bequests shall be
6 deposited in the Treasury in a separate fund and shall be
7 disbursed upon order of the Board.

8 (b) For the purpose of Federal income, estate, and
9 gift taxes, property accepted under subsection (a) of this
10 section shall be considered as a gift or bequest to or for the
11 use of the United States.

12 (c) Upon the request of the Board, the Secretary of the
13 Treasury may invest and reinvest in securities of the United
14 States any moneys contained in the fund herein authorized.
15 Income accruing from such securities, and from any other
16 property accepted to the credit of the fund authorized herein,
17 shall be disbursed upon the order of the Board.

18 (d) Funds not expended by the Board at the time of
19 expiration of the life of the Board shall revert to the Treasury
20 of the United States.

21 COMPENSATION OF THE BOARD

22 SEC. 15. Members of the Board who are not in
23 the regular full-time employ of the United States shall,
24 while attending meetings or conferences of the Board or

1 otherwise engaged in the business of the Board, be entitled
2 to receive compensation at a rate not to exceed the daily
3 rate currently being paid grade 18 of the General Schedule
4 under Section 5332 of title 5, United States Code, including
5 traveltime, and, while so serving on the business of the Board
6 away from their homes or regular places of business, they
7 may be allowed travel expenses; including per diem in lieu of
8 subsistence, as authorized by section 5703 of title 5, United
9 States Code, for persons employed intermittently in the Gov-
10 ernment service. Payments under this section shall not ren-
11 der members of the Board employees or officials of the
12 United States for any purpose. Member of the Board who
13 are in the employ of the United States shall be entitled to
14 travel expenses when traveling on the business of the Board.

15 STAFF SERVICES

16 SEC. 16. (a) An Executive Director of the Board
17 shall be appointed by the President. The Executive Director
18 shall be responsible to the Board for carrying out the metric
19 conversion program according to the provisions of this Act
20 and the policies established by the Board.

21 (b) The Executive Director of the Board shall serve full
22 time subject to the provisions of section 5315 of title 5, United
23 States Code.

24 SEC. 17. (a) The Board is authorized to appoint and
25 fix the compensation of such staff personnel as may be
26 necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act in accord-

1 ance with the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III
2 of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code.

3 (b) The Board is authorized to employ experts and
4 consultants or organizations thereof as authorized by section
5 3109 of title 5, United States Code, compensate individuals
6 so employed at rates not in excess of the rate currently being
7 paid grade 18 of the General Schedule under section 5332
8 of such title, including traveltime, and allow them, while
9 away from their homes or regular places of business, travel
10 expenses (including per diem in lieu of subsistence) as au-
11 thorized by section 5703 of said title 5 for persons in the
12 Government service employed: *Provided, however, That*
13 contracts for such temporary employment may be renewed
14 annually.

15 SEC. 18. Financial and administrative services (includ-
16 ing those related to budgeting, accounting, financial report-
17 ing, personnel, and procurement) and such other staff serv-
18 ices as may be requested by the Board shall be provided
19 the Board by the Secretary of Commerce, for which pay-
20 ment shall be made in advance, or by reimbursement, from
21 funds of the Board in such amounts as may be agreed upon
22 by the Chairman of the Board and the Secretary of Com-
23 merce. In performing these functions for the Board, the
24 Secretary is authorized to obtain such information and as-
25 sistance from other Federal agencies as may be necessary.

FUNDS FOR THE BOARD

SEC. 19. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. Appropriations to carry out the provisions of this Act may remain available for obligation and expenditure for such period or periods as may be specified in the Acts making such appropriations.

Union Calendar No. 261

93d CONGRESS
1st Session

H. R. 11035

[Report No. 93-604]

A BILL

To declare a national policy of converting to the metric system in the United States, and to establish a National Metric Conversion Board to coordinate the voluntary conversion to the metric system over a period of ten years.

By Mr. TEAGUE of Texas, Mr. DAVIS of Georgia, Mr. MOSHER, Mr. HECHLER of West Virginia, Mr. BELT, Mr. DOWNING, Mr. WYDIER, Mr. FUQUA, Mr. WINN, Mr. SYMINGTON, Mr. FREY, Mr. HANNA, Mr. GOLDWATER, Mr. FLOWERS, Mr. ESCH, Mr. ROE, Mr. ORONIN, Mr. COTTER, Mr. MARTIN of North Carolina, Mr. MCCORMACK, Mr. BERGLAND, Mr. PICKLE, Mr. BROWN of California, Mr. MURFORD, and Mr. GUNTER

OCTOBER 18, 1973

Referred to the Committee on Science and Astronautics

OCTOBER 23, 1973

Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed